

# Councilmember Kathy Lambert

## County Update

Happy Holidays!

It is an honor to be serving you on the King County Council. As you may have noted by channel surfing on CTV, things have really changed this year with a bipartisan effort to get things done. The proof of the strong working relationship is seen in the budget vote of 12 to 1 with only agreed upon amendments - many of them technical in nature - on the last day. I had the pleasure of being a member of the negotiating team for the budget. There were many tough decisions, but we kept the focus of making county government more accountable and efficient in providing county services.

It is amazing to learn about ALL the various important services that the county provides such as sheriff, courts, jails, roads, public health, parks and recreational facilities, land use and zoning and the list goes on.....

There are three issues that I would like to highlight for you in this newsletter - the overview of the budget, the creation of a new commission to evaluate King County government, and a review of the election process. I hope this information is helpful to you.

During the November 5 election process, I received a great number of phone calls from rightfully concerned citizens, including my son at college, about their ballots. I had several meetings with the director of the elections department and observed during election night as the ballots were brought back and processed. As you may have heard on the news or read in the newspapers much of the early information about the late ballots was incorrect.

On December 9<sup>th</sup> a public briefing was held on this issue. Bob Roegner, the Director of the King County Elections Department, testified and answered questions on activities that took place on Election Day. I believe that there are many more questions that need to be answered and have signed a letter with several other council members requesting Secretary of State Sam Reed to conduct a full investigation. I have spoken with the Secretary of State and his staff on this issue. As the Seattle Times reported, he will honor our request.

It is very important that we get to the bottom of this issue. Our democracy strongly relies on a fairly and efficiently run elections process, and I am thankful for the many phone calls from District Three residents who had not yet received their ballot. **I very strongly believe that every vote counts and want you to know that the county council is working hard to restore your confidence in the election process.**

If you have any questions, please contact me at (206)296-1003 or send me an email at: [kathy.lambert@metrokc.gov](mailto:kathy.lambert@metrokc.gov). Thank you very much.

I hope you and your families have a safe and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,



King County

## Lambert helps negotiate budget

**Much of the county's expenditures are required by state law, county ordinance, or public vote. The county council has operational control of only 17% of the entire budget.**

The budget closes the structural gap of \$53 million next year between revenues and expenses, in part through a number of policy initiatives that include:

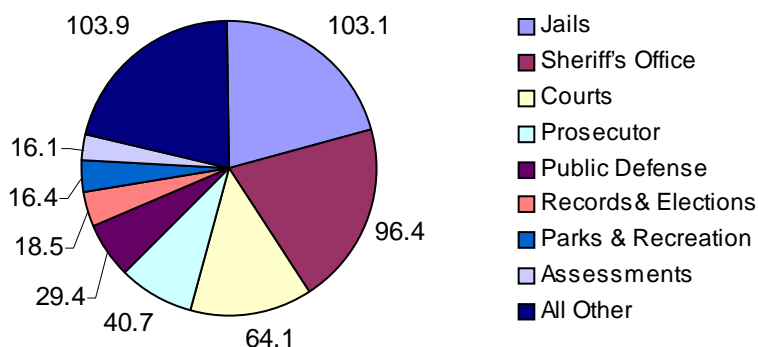
- t focuses funding on the maintenance and operation of such regional facilities as Marymoor Park and the King County Aquatic Center, and on parks and pools in the unincorporated areas where King County is the only local government.



- Creation of a new Cultural Development Authority of King County that moves administration of arts and cultural resources programs out of the general fund to a more stable funding base.
- Adoption of the Adult Justice Operational Master Plan (AJOMP) which helps free up jail space and save money through such alternatives as drug court, mental health court and driver relicensing programs. Relocating jail procedures enabled budget writers to hold 2003 spending for adult detention at 2002 levels, and reinvest the savings in programs under the AJOMP that help reduce involvement in the criminal justice system while at the same time preserving public safety. Without reductions in operational costs, by 2007 the costs of the county's criminal justice system would entirely consume the general fund.

*"The council has reprioritized how we deal with jail inmates. Many people that are in jail are awaiting trial and not dangerous criminals. Under the new plan they will be evaluated by a judge and sent to treatment, home detention, day reporting to monitor behavior, or put in jail as needed. This will allow us to be proactive in getting to the root of the problem, targeting what will best change behavior and hopefully reducing or breaking the revolving door cycle at the county jail. These changes have allowed us to make many needed changes in our budget." ~ Kathy Lambert*

# KING COUNTY BUDGET



2003 Adopted Budget (Millions of \$)

Jails	103.1
Sheriff's Office	96.4
Courts	64.1
Prosecutor	40.7
Public Defense	29.4
Records & Elections	18.5
Parks & Recreation	16.4
Assessments	16.1
All Other	103.9
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>488.6</b>

## NEW COMMISSION TO ASSESS KING COUNTY

## Lambert and Patterson sponsor Commission on Governance

King County Councilmembers Kathy Lambert and Julia Patterson sponsored an ordinance that establishes a Commission on Governance, a nine-member body to be comprised of law enforcement, academic, labor, and business leaders that will examine the structure and operations of King County government. The ordinance was approved by the Metropolitan King County Council on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

The purpose of the commission is to study and assess the current structure of King County government and make recommendations to the executive and the council on a number of issues including:

- Examining county procedures to increase efficiency
- Examining current expense (general fund) expenditures.
- Examining the county's revenue structure.
- Deciding if there should be a dedicated revenue source for the criminal justice system, including funding

for human services programs that reduce recidivism.

- Determining if elected county officials should be partisan or non-partisan.
- Determining if county officials should be elected or appointed.
- Evaluating the size and structure of King County government, including all elective county offices, and the

number of councilmembers  
and their staff.

No elected official or candidate for office may serve on the commission. The nine commission members will be selected by the County Executive, the Chair of the Council, the Prosecuting Attorney and

the Presiding Judge of Superior Court. The Executive will then officially appoint the commission members, subject to confirmation by the council. (The County Executive is required by county charter to appoint commission members.) Commission members will issue a final report and present their recommendations to the County Council by March 31, 2004.

*"All aspects of the county government will be examined by the Commission on Governance. I have made a list of my concerns and suggestions. I am eager to have the commission's expertise and input as we partner to restore public trust in county government." ~ Kathy Lambert*

